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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
Research and Engineering
Washington 25, D.C.

15 January 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. W. M. HOLADAY, DIRECTOR OF GUIDED MISSILES
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Satellite Plans of the Military Departments

In response to your memorandum of 6 September 1957, I have the honor to submit some conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Group on Special Capabilities.

The Group arrived at its conclusions by weighing the technical capabilities of large rocket systems, both existing and planned, against potential military applications as presented to the Group by the Military Departments.

The Group did not concern itself with organizational or administrative policy questions involving such things as roles and missions of the military services. Other broad National Policy questions now being considered by the Congress are not likely to be resolved quickly; so the Group has, without any thought of anticipating the outcome of this National debate, simply accepted four points that now seem rather obvious or that have been widely supported by competent military and scientific opinion.

The comprehensive and detailed presentations to the Group by the Army, Navy, and Air Force are not made a part of this report, as all of this material is available to your office and no useful purpose would seem to be served by reproducing it here. The salient facts which determine technical capabilities and the foreseeable applications of satellites have been summarized from the detailed presentations only to the extent desirable for ready reference in connection with the conclusions.

REVIEW ON 19 May 1988

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I am pleased to convey the thanks and appreciation of the Group to the officers, engineers, and scientists of the Military Departments and their contractors for their generous assistance and cooperation.

Thanks are also due the staff of the RAND Corporation at Santa Monica, California for their help and facilities for a number of the meetings of the Group.

The members of the Group are, of course, willing to assist you further with these matters should you so desire.

H. J. Stewart

H. J. STEWART
Chairman
Advisory Group on Special
Capabilities

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SATELLITE PLANS OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

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I SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions of the Advisory Group on Special Capabilities are based upon the following assumptions which may now be conservatively regarded as axiomatic:

A. There is a clear military need for satellite techniques.

B. Valuable scientific data will be obtained from an expanded satellite program.

C. Ultimately commercial returns will be realized from a national capability in satellite techniques.

D. Manned exploration of space and space travel will be an accepted national objective.

Conclusions 1 through 3 are in answer to specific questions in Mr. Holaday's memo of 6 September 1957 to the Chairman of the Group, a copy of which is included in this report.

1. Rocket systems are sufficiently advanced to warrant immediate support of satellite techniques for military applications.

2. Four of the five large ballistic missile systems currently under development, namely JUPITER, THOR, ATLAS, and TITAN, can provide the launching booster capability for a variety of useful military satellites. The Navy does not recommend the use of POLARIS because of severe interference and late availability. Future military satellite developments should take full advantage of both IRBM and ICBM classes of missiles.

3. With respect to the question of procurement of additional small satellite vehicles, it appears that:

a. The present lot of VANGUARDS and JUPITER C's will probably be expended by the end of the calendar year 1958.

b. Any satellite program based on an IRBM will probably not be operating smoothly before the end of calendar year 1959.

c. The United States should have a continuing program of satellite launchings without lengthy periods of inactivity.

d. Satellites of the 20-pound class will have some military applications.

e. Launchings of small satellites from Camp Cooke will provide useful training and facilities shake-down.

f. There is good likelihood that the second and third stage vehicles of VANGUARD will be usable in more advanced systems based on IRBM.

In view of these considerations, the Group recommends early action to initiate procurement of 6 to 12 additional IGY-type satellite systems. As soon as this action is assured, the National Academy of Sciences should be so advised and their proposals for satellite utilization solicited. At the same time, the Military Departments should be requested to propose uses within their needs.

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General Conclusions

The Group has reached a number of general conclusions and recommendations regarding the nature of the program in the field of satellites and space flight which we feel the United States should undertake. They are as follows:

1. There should be a sound, well-coordinated National program leading into large satellites. It should not be limited in scope, but should cover all aspects of satellite and space flight. The Group recommends that at least 10% of the funding of such a program be devoted to relevant research and exploratory experimentation.

2. The first major step in the National program should exploit the impressive potentialities of the IRBM boosters, which would appear to be capable of satisfying most of the military satellite objectives even for the long term, as well as many of the initial problems of space flight. The Group recommends that a program emphasizing minimum vehicle development effort be initiated immediately, with concurrent planning for longer term exploitation, including improved high speed stages of the IRBM vehicles.

3. The larger ICBM's will make it possible to carry out elaborate military and other missions, including many studies in space medicine. WS-117L is an initial effort in this direction and the Group supports its continuation, but recommends that the National program include alternative efforts toward the full development of the ICBM potentials for both military and non-military applications.

4. In all phases of the National program the military and scientific needs should be organized so as to be mutually reinforcing; and the Group recommends that vehicles be specifically allocated as needed for the various military and scientific uses. Details of such allocations should be determined by the Department of Defense in consultation with the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Science Foundation.

The Group also makes the following more specific comments and recommendations:

1. All three of the military services have stated their support of a national satellite and space flight program serving both military and scientific needs.

2. All three of the military services have stated that the highest priority military requirements for satellites are for reconnaissance and surveillance. Other common military requirements exist for satellites as aids to navigation, in communications, and for weather data collection (see Table II).

3. All three military services presented short-term programs using an IRBM booster capable of launching 300 to 500-pound satellites on about 200-mile orbits. From the technical standpoint the Group considers both JUPITER and THOR equivalent for these purposes when they have been developed to the point where they are sufficiently reliable.

4. Specific reconnaissance methods for the 300 to 500-pound satellites included an Air Force proposal using film recovery techniques and an Army proposal for television type reconnaissance. The latter could be tested in a 100-pound satellite which might be available sooner. The Group recommends testing of both of these techniques as the highest priority portion of the immediate program. A fractional allocation of potential vehicles in the short-term program should also be made for scientific test purposes other military requirements and space exploration. The scale of the program should aim toward a launching capacity of at least one a month in 1959. It appears that a great expansion of this rate will be required as soon as feasible, and coordinated military planning is therefore urgently required.

5. Orbits of higher inclination than those possible at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida (which is limited to orbits of between 28 and 45 degrees inclination) are essential for military applications and will require launching sites which will make it possible to launch satellites into polar orbits. Camp Cooke is one such site. The additional site and facility requirements at Patrick, Cooke and possibly elsewhere for the rapidly expanding program must be determined and implemented simultaneously. The Group recommends that, as one of the first steps in any enlarged satellite program, steps be taken to activate Camp Cooke or equivalent sites suitable for polar orbit launchings immediately.

6. The inventory of national resources in rocket systems capable of orbiting useful payloads now or within the next several years include the VANGUARD, JUPITER "C", JUPITER, THOR, ATLAS and TITAN. The larger of these boosters will be coming into maturity about two years hence and should provide a capability of orbiting useful payloads up to about 3,000 pounds at 300 miles altitude and escape velocity applications for smaller payloads. Larger payloads will require that an intensive research and development effort be directed toward considerabley larger propulsion units or high-energy propellants, preferably both. Propulsion component development for maximum capability should be focused on high-capacity turbo-pumps and combustion chambers toward an objective of attaining a propulsion capability of 1 million pounds thrust or greater, in a single unit. The Group recommends that a formal program leading to high thrust rocket engines be initiated. The Group also recommends increased support for research and engineering developments with high-energy propellants, storable propellants, and the other basic technological fields contributing to high performance rocket applications. An increased effort on the development of highly reliable, long-lived components will be of high significance in determining the overall utility of satellites.

7. Unmanned (instrumented) explorations of the moon, Venus and Mars appear to be feasible within the capabilities of chemical propellants and presently planned systems. Preliminary lunar tests could be performed within the capabity of the IRBM systems and should be included in the early part of that program.

8. Manned exploration of the moon, Mars, and Venus may ultimately be feasible within the capability of chemical propellant systems.

9. The X-15 project represents the most advanced current project leading in the direction of manned space flight. While the Group did not formally review the X-15 project, it observes that any manned space flight program should draw on the experience of the X-15 program.

10. A preliminary presentation of the problem on anti-satellite missiles was presented to the Group by the Navy. The Group feels that this subject is in urgent need of further study by the military services.

11. The Navy also presented some consideration of the possibility of airborne satellite launching. While the Group does not necessarily indorse this approach, a more complete study leading to clarification of this question would be desirable.

II DISCUSSION

General

The Group's first general conclusion is a logical corollary of the 4 points which it accepted at the outset, and which have been supported by all of the presentations of the Military Departments. The Nation needs a sound, well-coordinated, and firmly conducted program leading to large satellites and manned space flight.

The National interests require that certain devices be placed in operation at the earliest possible date. The Group has tried to show in this report how the most useful of these devices for both military and scientific purposes can be realized at the earliest practicable dates.

The urgency of these projects has dictated the maximum possible use of existing equipment, particularly the large engines and other components. However, the Group emphasizes that in a field as new as the one here considered it is impossible to specify in detail the best possible long-range programs. For this reason, great emphasis must be placed on relevant research and experimentation of an exploratory nature. The Group therefore recommends that not less than 10 percent of available funds of the National program be devoted to these purposes.

The second general conclusion, and the one upon which the greatest emphasis should be placed, calls for immediate action to take advantage of the impressive potentialities of the IRBM boosters. If the decision on this point is promptly made, either THOR or JUPITER could be used to place 300 to 400-pound satellites on polar orbits at 200 nautical miles altitude by early 1959. Moreover, such a payload capability would satisfy the most urgent of the military satellite requirements in the reconnaissance and surveillance categories; and with some development might take care of many of the stated military requirements for some time to come.

The IRBM boosters are now well advanced in flight tests and should attain a degree of reliability adequate for satellite applications at least a year or more before equivalent status is reached with the ICBM. A 300 to 400-pound satellite payload seems to be about the minimum that would accommodate the desired military applications with adequate lifetime to accomplish the objectives. Such a payload capability would also accommodate many of the necessary tests preliminary to manned space flight. Moreover, some of the recent studies confirm the practicability of extending the satellite payload capability of the IRBM booster to at least a thousand pounds by 1960. One study concludes that the IRBM booster could probably launch a modified WS-117L vehicle during 1959 and advocates a program merging this interim effort with the longer term ATLAS-117L program with accompanying advantages in the latter development. The Group, therefore attaches the greatest importance to immediate action in support of using the earliest available IRBM's boosters because such a program has the best promise of yielding earliest results with relatively simple satellites for reconnaissance, and has also significant promise of longer term benefits.

The third general conclusion supports the continuation of the WS-117L program, and recommends simultaneous and complementary application of this vehicle system to both military and non-military uses. The more elaborate military missions require development of the maximum satellite payload capability, higher altitude orbits, more precise stabilization and control of the satellite, and longer useful life with attendant increases in power and other payload increases. The more elaborate scientific experiments impose similar requirements on the satellite vehicle. The ICBM boosters, the largest presently entering test, have the greatest potential for both military and non-military uses as the second step in the National program. These vehicles will be required as soon as available for advanced military applications, instrumented soft landings on the moon, tests with large animals, and other tests and experiments leading to space flight. Up to the present, significant development of the more elaborate satellite systems has been confined to very limited support of the WS-117L project; and the development phases of this project have emphasized the reconnaissance-surveillance aspects of military applications. The potentialities of WS-117L for other important applications are also greater in such things as communications, weather forecasting, and the many fields of pure science that would require an accurately stabilized and controlled satellite vehicle. It is, therefore, clear that the National program must, while placing the highest immediate priority upon satellites devised from IRBM boosters, also avoid stifling any satellite development that could fully exploit the next largest capability which will be available with the ICBM boosters. Not to recognize this advanced need and support it now could well bring on heavy penalties later. Early and effective support of the more elaborate satellite systems is necessary now if they are to be ready when the booster capability to launch them is realized.

For these reasons the Group recommends that the National program include alternative efforts leading to the development of satellite payloads for military and non-military applications which could exploit the full potential of the ICBM.

The fourth general conclusion recognizes the mutually reinforcing aspects of the military and scientific parts of the program. Advanced military developments depend upon advances in science.

The military necessity for intensive support of science particularly in this field is axiomatic. At the same time the pace of the engineering development of the basic boosters will be set primarily by military necessity. They require extensive and expensive ground launching installations; range or safety patrols and precautions; and they are beset by many hazards in handling. But it would be wrong to let the more obvious and immediate military necessities overshadow the equally vital military dependence upon longer term scientific observations or discoveries that can be provided by timely action. The proper action here, in the view of the Group, is to make specific allocations of satellite vehicles for both military and scientific uses. Details of such allocations should be determined by the Department of Defense drawing upon the experience and assistance of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Science Foundation, and the Group so recommends.

The Group has made a number of more specific comments and recommendations in amplification of the general conclusions discussed in the foregoing paragraphs. Most of these specific observations are self-explanatory in their summary form.

Among the specific recommendations the highest priority is placed on the earliest possible development of a military satellite of the 300-pound class which now seems to have promise of obtaining pictorial information of the USSR possibly within one year. Such a satellite may well give highly valuable and timely military information that could be obtained by no other foreseeable means within that period. Two schemes were described to the Group, one is basically photographic and offers the chance of recovering photographic film; the other is basically a spot-scan television technique with radio transmission to earth.

The Group recommends testing of both of these techniques as the highest priority of the immediate program.

For all of the military applications and for most of the scientific or commercial uses of satellites a launching site from which satellites can be placed on polar orbits is necessary. An orbit with inclination less than the latitude of the launching site is possible, but it is impracticable with existing techniques. On the other hand, it is possible to launch satellites on any orbits with inclination greater than the latitude of the launch site. However, the ground hazards from discarded rocket stages severely restrict the geographic sites that can be used. Mobile launching facilities are also similarly restricted, but not to the same degree as large fixed base installations. As to military vulnerability of launching sites, the same considerations would seem to be in order as apply to large military missile launching sites.

The rocket systems either now available, well advanced in development or currently planned that could be adapted to satellite launchers or space missions include a very wide variety of attractive combinations from the smallest like VANGUARD and JUNO I (formerly called JUPITER "C") with satellite payload of about 20 pounds at 200 miles altitude to an improved TITAN supplemented by additional stages which should be capable of orbiting in excess of 10,000 pounds at 200 miles.

There are many ways to appraise this rich assortment of possibilities. The Group has, however, considered first the propulsion and guidance performance of the assortment, for upon these 2 parameters mainly depend a satellite's orbital characteristics, the useful weights that it can carry, and its lifetime.

Secondly, the Group has accepted the statements of the military services on required applications, considered the methods proposed by the Military Departments for meeting their needs, and has attempted to show what can best be done, when it might be done with what is available, and what appears will be most needed in the future.

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By this process the Group has selected the combinations given in Table III as typical of those which could best meet the immediate and longer term objectives.

Here a word of caution is in order. The estimated payload weights and dates of availability used in this report are those given to the Group by the Military Departments. The Group feels that these estimates of dates are very optimistic on the basis of all experience to date with development of missiles and satellites. Certainly none of the objective will be accomplished any earlier than proposed. The calendar times estimated by the military services should probably be increased by a factor of 1.5 to 2; the validity of any particular estimate can best be judged by comparison with past performances of the same group. The Group has used these dates only as a guide to relative time of earliest availability and drawn its conclusions accordingly.

Somewhat similar caution is indicated in accepting proposed payload weights. Here, however, the Group, after considering the detailed tabulations of estimated and actual performance data, believe that the weights attributed to the various missions are more reasonable.

In summary, it seems to be an understatement to say that there is a wealth of resources in the National inventory of capabilities. Before attempting to select the best possibilities for a National program it is necessary to appraise the proposed military and other possible applications to see which of the proposed combinations might best accomplish the most for minimum effort.

TABLE I

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PROPULSION AND GUIDANCE COMBINATIONS THAT COULD GIVE 200 MILE SATELLITES

1st Stage	2nd Stage	3rd Stage	4th Stage	Guidance	Satellite Payload*
VAN 1**	VAN 2	VAN 3	None	VAN	20
VAN 1	VAN 2(lightened)	VAN 3(improved)	None	VAN	55
THOR	VAN 3	None	None	Spin 2nd	50-100
THOR	4-VAN 3's	None	None	Spin 2nd	200-400
THOR	4-VAN 3's	VAN 3	None	Spin 2nd & 3rd	300-500
THOR	XM-34	VAN 3	None	?	500-700
THOR(175k)	15,000 lbs.	None	None	ICBM	2,800
THOR(165k)	VAN 2	VAN 3(improved)	None	VAN	475
THOR(165k)	VAN 2(enlarged)	3-VAN 3(improved)	None	VAN	800
THOR(165k)	VAN 2(enlarged)	3-VAN 3(improved)	VAN 3(improved)	VAN	900
	(JUPITER plus VANGUARD combinations same as THOR plus VANGUARD)				
REDSTONE	11-SARG***	3-SARG	1-SARG	Spin upper stages	17
JUPITER	11-SARG	3-SARG	1-SARG	"	110
JUPITER	12-VAN 3	3-VAN 3	1-VAN 3	"	540
ATLAS	Sustainer	Storable prop.	None	ICBM	4,090
ATLAS	Sustainer	F_2/NH_3	None	ICBM	4,700
TITAN	TITAN-2	15,000 lbs. Storable prop.	None	ICBM	4,600
TITAN(400k)	110,000 lbs. F_2/NH_3	20,000 lbs. F_2/NH_3	None	ICBM	10,000
TITAN	VAN-1(modified)	VAN-2	None	VAN	2,000
TITAN	TITAN-2	None	None	ICBM	3,000
1,250,000 lbs.	TITAN-1	TITAN-2	None	Special	25,000

*Eastward from AFMTC. For polar and retrograde orbits, the payload would be considerably reduced.

**The terms VAN 1, VAN 2, and VAN 3 refer to the first, second, and third stages of the present VANGUARD system.

***The term SARG refers throughout to six-inch scale Sargeant motor.

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Military Applications of Satellites

(Table II)

The military applications given in Table II have been assembled by the Group in the order of priority in which the statements of the Military Departments would seem to place them.

All military services put the reconnaissance-surveillance applications at the top of the list. Within this general category there is some difference in priority of the sub-items depending upon the primary service mission. But the urgent need for intelligence data of the Soviet Union at the earliest date that seems possible with satellite techniques was stressed by all.

Many of the other military applications, particularly weather forecasts, communications, and navigation will sometimes, though not always, be possible with the same satellite used for surveillance. This is also true for many of the science applications. The feasibility of accomplishing satellite-countermeasure techniques by satellites is not as clear as the use of satellites for countermeasures against detection systems for ballistic missiles or other satellites.

A point stressed by the Navy in support of countermeasures against satellites deserves emphasis here: If the USSR develops a satellite surveillance system, they will have attained the means, which they have never before enjoyed, for keeping continuous plots of surface vessels in all oceans, and thereby make even more formidable their large submarine fleet.

Armed space patrol applications are so dependent upon experience yet to be gained in high performance propulsion systems, space medicine, and so on that little can be said about their potentials now except to recognize their ultimate possibility.

On the basis of the presentations by the Military Departments the Group is satisfied that a number of the proposed military applications of satellites have now been demonstrated to be sufficiently practicable to warrant immediate and substantial support by the Department of Defense. The Group's conclusions and recommendations are believed to represent in general terms the support it has given to the broad point of military uses. But the justification for a National program of the magnitude indicated requires a considerably broader view. It is necessary to look beyond the immediate or direct military applications in the conventional or traditional usage of the term.

The strongest point made by the Military Departments in support of direct military use is surveillance; but in a condition of declared war, for example, between the USSR and the United States, the Group has some reservations on the value of satellites for some types of surveillance, because under such conditions the question of "overt acts" would have been determined and other methods requiring overflight could be used.

Satellite reconnaissance or surveillance seems therefore attractive in the present epoch because this technique offers some promise of getting important and timely intelligence on the USSR with minimum political risks, but also because it could be used as a forceful political weapon in revealing to the world by photographs of the Soviet Union many things that are now effectively kept secret. Such employment would incidentally go far toward recovery of National prestige or technological leadership which has suffered momentarily.

Most of the other military applications have great potential non-military value, particulary as tools for science, weather forecasting, and communications.

However speculative the success of some of the military proposals may now seem to be, the Group is convinced that there is more than adequate justification for a program of the magnitude indicated.

When all of these points are conservatively weighed, the conclusion cannot be escaped that any National space program must be substantial, must be immediately authorized, and must be firmly directed. Any half-hearted or diluted effort will not do.

To indicate some idea of the magnitude of a National program such as the Group has in mind it can be said that the opinions of individual members of the Group fall between about 1 and 3 billion dollars for a three-year period for the overall National expenditure.

TABLE II

SUMMARY OF MILITARY APPLICATIONS
Stated by Military Departments

	Army	Navy	Air Force
1. Surveillance, Reconnaissance, Mapping			
Photographic, high resolution (20 ft.)	x	x	x
Low resolution (100 ft.) (Targets, damage, post strike analy.)	x	x	x
Early warning against attack	x	x	x
Electronic emissions (Ferret type)	x	x	x
Ships and aircraft plots	x	x	x
Submarine detection via sono buoys		x	
2. Communications (High frequency broad band relays, Electronic countermeasures, monitoring)	x	x	x
3. Weather and forecasts (Worldwide cloud cover, systems status, accurate forecasts)	x	x	x
4. Navigation (all weather)		x	x
5. Satellite countermeasures	x	x	x
6. Science directed toward military applications (Magnetic field for commun., atmospheric, thermal, solar radiation, for weather research; ionospheric observations; space biology, meteorite distribution; anti-missile research; air density)	x	x	x
7. Armed space patrol	x	x	x

TABLE III

SELECTED SATELLITE SYSTEMS, PAYLOAD CAPABILITY, AND AVAILABILITY DATES

System	Gross Weight lbs.	No. of Stages	Satellite Payload at 200 mi. alt. Polar	Satellite Payload at 200 mi. alt. 30 deg.	Lunar Payload lbs.	Initial launch date
VANGUARD	22,500	3	-	22	-	Mch. 58
Improved	22,543	3	35	55	-	Nov. 58
THOR-VAN	111,340	3	350	475	50	Jan. 59
Improved	116,184	3	600	800	-	Jan. 60
Improved	116,184	4	700	900	125	Jan. 60
JUNO I	62,500	4	-	17	-	Feb. 58
JUNO II	110,541	4	80	110	15	Jun. 58
JUNO III	116,619	4	400	540	100	Jan. 59
THOR-117L	110,400	2	300	400	50	Jun. 58
ATLAS-117L	270,000	2½	2,000	2,700	1,000	Jun. 59
TITAN-VAN	195,000	3	1,400	1,800	375	1959

(JUNO I is a REDSTONE booster with 3 clusters of SARGEANTS)
(JUNO II is a JUPITER booster with 3 clusters of SARGENATS)
(JUNO III is a JUPITER booster with 3 clusters of stage 3 of VANGUARD)

VANGUARD and JUNO I:	Probably should not be extended beyond present program.
Improved VANGUARD: and JUNO II:	Useful for a variety of small military and scientific satellites. Probably should not be continued beyond 1959 in view of cost compared with payload capability and availability dates of other systems.
THOR-VANGUARD and improved ones, JUNO III and THOR-117L:	Useful for all military satellite missions, more complex scientific experiments, and preliminary lunar shots. Continuing large requirement for vehicles in this size range foreseen.
ATLAS, TITAN:	Will be required as soon as available for advanced military applications, instrumented soft landings on moon, tests with large animals and tests leading to manned space flight.

SELECTED SATELLITE SYSTEMS, PAYLOAD CAPABILITIES, AND DATES OF AVAILABILITY (TABLE III)

Table III gives in summary form the relevant performance data of those satellite systems upon which the proposals of the Military Departments seem to focus.

The caution on estimated availability dates previously expressed in this report is repeated.

The Group requested information from the Air Force on their intentions respecting use of the NAVAHO boosters in satellite programs, but they did not respond.

Airborne launch or "fly-up" techniques briefly referred to in some of the presentations are not listed in Table III. The Group did not go into the performance characteristics of this method except to recognize the desirability of a review which would take into account any revision of conclusions made in past studies that might be needed.

An examination of Table III indicates that the National capability for satellite systems falls into three broad classes representing an increasing performance potential over a period of time.

The vehicles having the earliest availability are in the IGY class, capable of orbiting a 20-pound payload and available in early 1958. This IGY class includes VANGUARD and JUNO I.

In the next available group are those derived from the IRBM, capable of orbiting a 500-pound payload and available in late 1958 to early 1959. This IRBM derived class includes THOR-VANGUARD, JUNO II, JUNO III and THOR-117L.

In the third group are those derived from the ICBM, capable of orbiting a 2,000 pound or larger payload and available in late 1959. The ICBM class includes ATLAS-117L and TITAN-117L.

The Group recommends that the National satellite and space-flight program take full advantage of this growing capability, actively exploiting each advance in performance potential as it becomes available rather than waiting for the ultimate or attempting to develop separate means for launching satellites. The recommendations of the Group taken as a whole support a National program that starts with the IGY class, proceeds to the IRBM derived class and thus to the ICBM derived class. The Group cannot, on technical grounds, choose among several alternatives in each class. Within a given class each of the proposed alternatives would have essentially the same technical performance and are roughly in the same state of development.

It will be obvious that to achieve a well coordinated and forceful directed program with the least risk of loss in time or waste of facilities and skills requires the maximum effective use, on a continuing basis, of the existing highly skilled teams currently working on satellite and space-flight developments for the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

In order to narrow further the selection to the best available alternative, decisions of an administrative nature would be required which the Group feels go beyond the terms of your request.

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REPRESENTATIVE SPACE MISSIONS AND APPROXIMATE REQUIREMENTS

Mission	Total Velocity (ft/sec)	Payload Needed(lbs)	Guidance Equivalent to ICBM CEP of(miles)
Ballistic Missiles, 1,000 n.m.	12,500		
5,000 n.m.	22,500		
10,000 n.m.	24,000		
Sounding Rockets, 1,000 n.m.	17,500	10	
10,000 n.m.	32,000	10	
Earth Satellites at 300 n.m. alt.	26,000	10	
200 n.m. perigee, 1400 n.m. apogee	26,000		1,000
250 " 400 "	26,000		50
recoverable	29,000	30	
at 1,000 n.m. alt.	28,000	10	
20,000 n.m. alt.	38,000	20	
100,000 n.m. alt.	38,000	20	
Lunar Vehicles Impact	35,000	40	30
Instrument Landing	44,000	200	5
Lunar Satellite	38,500	50	50
Circum Lunar and return to Earth	35,000	25	50
" " " " U. S.	35,000	50	0.1
Interplanetary Vehicles			
Artificial Asteroid	37,000	200	25
Venus Shot	37,000	200	0.3
Mars Shot	37,000	200	0.1
Pluto Shot	55,000	?	Small

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE PROPOSALS

While differing in details the Army, Navy, and Air Force advocate a coordinated and comprehensive National program leading to manned space vehicles. Their presentations were based upon voluminous engineering and scientific studies which were made available to the Group, and copies of which are on file in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Director of Guided Missiles.

All three services recognize the need for the integration of the scientific and military elements of the National program that will reduce the risks of dilution of National effort and resources and enhance the prospects of early recovery of American leadership in space technology and exploration.

Army Program

The Army proposes "A National Integrated Missile and Space Vehicle Development Program" for 14 years extending through 1971, and estimated to cost in the order of 14 billion dollars total.

The early phases of the Army program covering the first 3 years is a 16-vehicle program based upon the JUPITER missile as first stage booster, supplemented by spinning clusters of rockets. The estimated cost of this part of the program for the 3-year period is about $440 million. It includes the 20-pound experimental reconnaissance satellite by June or September 1958, and a 509-pound satellite by January 1959. The Army estimates a capability for a 15-pound lunar shot by June or September 1958 and a 120-pound lunar shot with lunar photographs by January 1959. Their estimate of a capability for lunar impact with a 50 to 100 pounds is sometimein 1959. The longer term parts of the Army's suggested program include manned carriers and would require more powerful boosters like TITAN with various combinations of high-speed stages as do all other proposals.

Navy Program

The Navy stresses relatively light vehicles for the short range part of the program. In their view most of the immediate military requirements can be fulfilled with payloads of 300 pounds or less.

While likewise proposing an extensive National program for satellites and space vehicles, based upon booster rockets, the Navy also attaches considerable importance to the X-15 vehicle approach as possibly the earliest method of obtaining manned earth-orbiting vehicles; and they estimate that it might be achieved within 3 years. The Navy also advocates that more attention be given to engineering developments using even lighter launch mechanisms and include within their program 17 vehicles suggested by the Naval Ordnance Test Station for orbiting 10-pound satellites. They also recommend concurrent development of the "fly-up" method in addition to the rocket launch development.

As the short range part of the program through 1961, the Navy proposes a 50-vehicle schedule including satellites ranging from 10 pounds to 300 pounds, an anti-satellite demonstration, and a fly-up launch demonstration, for a total estimated cost of about $212 million. They also propose as inclusions in this schedule 5 lunar shots and a first manned orbital flight with the X-15 technique, but cost estimates are not yet available.

The 40 to 300 pound satellites of the Navy program would be launched by improved VANGUARD vehicles for the smaller, and a combination of THOR and VANGUARD components for the larger satellites.

As the first part of a longer-range program the Navy proposes four 1500-pound satellites using TITAN-VANGUARD combinations. Cost estimates for this part of the program are not yet available.

Air Force Program

The Air Force program emphasizes the largest, most elaborate satellites and space vehicles which are based upon the ATLAS and TITAN missiles. But they also suggest the possibility of a 300-pound recoverable photographic satellite using the THOR booster for availability during 1959.

The Air Force Advanced Reconnaissance System, WS-117L, Discoverer has been under intensive study since about 1951, although studies of feasibility were begun in 1946. The objectives of this program include photographs expected to give an ultimate resolution of 17 feet, ferret detection and location of various high frequency emissions (up to 18,000 megacycles) with initial accuracy of 60 miles and increasing precision later, infrared surveillance of aircraft and ICBM's, and ultimate visual surveillance with television techniques of ½ mile or better.

Under an accellerated program the Air Force estimates that the first of test vehicles of this program could be ready during 1959 for launching 2,000-pound satellites at 300 mile altitudes. Including costs already incurred, this program would probably cost about 200 million through 1959, but the Group is not clear on Air Force cost estimates.

The Air Force estimate of a recoverable photographic satellite for use with THOR is about $20 million in addition to the cost of the boosters. Reliable estimates of costs for longer term elements of the Air Force suggestions are not available.

The studies and development to date on WS-117L cover almost every phase of the reconnaissance satellite problem, including nuclear power, radio isotope reactor power, solar cells and their possible applications. The studies also go far into the accompanying ground tracking and communication facilities.

~~SECRET~~ COPY

September 6, 1957

Guided Missiles

MEMORANDUM TO CHAIRMAN, ADVISORY GROUP ON SPECIAL CAPABILITIES

SUBJECT: Satellite Programs

You and the members of your Group represent a unique body of experience in satellite systems and the actual problems of their development, having studied the possibilities before the announcement of the scientific satellite program, and having monitored its progress from the beginning. You also considered the larger, longer range possibilities such as WS 117L early in 1956 and made certain recommendations on it to the Department of Defense, which for a number of reasons could not be implemented at that time.

I feel that it may be timely to ask the Group to help me by preparing for the time when it will ultimately be necessary to decide on a number of questions on military applications of satellite techniques.

The feasibility and timing of such applications seem to depend mainly upon the capabilities of rocket systems, their availability, and, of course, upon the outcome of Project VANGUARD, our first venture into this field.

I should now therefore like to ask the Advisory Group on Special Capabilities to look again into the satellite plans and programs of the military departments and submit your conclusions on the technical capabilities based on the best available facts at this time.

In approaching the broad question of possible military applications of satellites, which is yet unresolved, I should especially like to have your views on such questions as the following:

> Are the rocket vehicle systems sufficiently advanced to warrant a decision to support satellite techniques for such military applications as proposed by the Air Force in Project WS 117L, or as may be proposed by other military departments?
>
> Which ones of the missile or rocket systems currently in development would seem to be the best for military satellite use, and why?

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In your first report in August 1955, the Group visualized a possible continuing need for small scientific satellites, presumably for scientific needs apart from the more direct military applications. In the light of present experience with VANGUARD and its high cost, do you foresee any military, or for that matter, any scientific uses for such small satellites that could not be served by larger satellites, if larger ones are to be developed?

Alternatively, if scientific or technical limitations in your view will delay successful attainment of larger (say, 500 to 2000-pound) satellites within 2 or 3 years, to what extent should the Department of Defense support a continuing program of smaller satellites for military applications or developments necessary to success later with larger systems?

Please submit any additional findings which you feel would be helpful to the Department of Defense in determining its policy for the future with respect to satellite vehicles.

As all of the above matters are within the current directive to the Advisory Group on Special Capabilities, no further amendments to it are believed necessary.

In arranging with the military services for hearings, interviews, or consultations, it should be made clear that your investigations do not imply any tacit acceptance by the Secretary of Defense or this office of the view that there are important and immediate military applications of satellites, as it has not yet been satisfactorily demonstrated as being sufficiently practicable to warrant early and substantial support.

As to timing, I shall be grateful if you could submit your main conclusions by March 1958.

S/W. M. Holaday
W. M. HOLADAY
Special Assistant for
Guided Missiles

MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE OF THE ADVISORY GROUP OF SPECIAL CAPABILITIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

3-4 Oct. 1957	Room 3E 131, Pentagon
18 Oct. 1957	Rand Corp., Santa Monica, California
14-15 Nov. 1957	" " "
18-20 Dec. 1957	" " "

Membership of the Group

Dr. Homer J. Stewart, Chairman
Dr. Robert W. Buchheim
Mr. George H. Clement
Dr. Joseph Kaplan
Dr. C. C. Lauritsen (Absent for meetings of 3-4 Oct.)
Dr. Robert R. McMath (Absent for all meetings)
Dr. Richard Porter
Dr. J. Barkley Rosser

Staff

Mr. J. O. Spriggs (DGM) Executive Secretary
Mr. Paul A. Smith (Consultant, ASD, R&E) Secretary

[redacted] DECLA. IFIED ⑲ ✓

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

CLASSIFIED BY ____________
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO YEAR
INTERVALS DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER
31, 1966

FEB 28 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of the Air Force

SUBJECT: Reconnaissance Satellites and Manned Space Exploration

1. Reference is made to the Air Force proposal for accelerating military reconnaissance satellites and outer space vehicle projects discussed in your memorandum dated 12 November 1957, and your memorandum of 1 February 1958 requesting that continuation of the Air Force military reconnaissance project be clarified.

2. I have reviewed your proposal in consultation with the Director of Guided Missiles, the Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, and the Director of Central Intelligence. In our review we have been guided by the following general policy considerations:

a. The Department of Defense must be alert to avoid within and between the Services any unnecessary duplication of military and scientific space projects even though some degree of risk is thereby involved, in order that funds and other resources may be available for the large variety of absolutely essential programs.

b. The scientific and engineering capabilities of each of the Military Departments must be used with maximum effectiveness and efficiency. No single Military Department should be overloaded with too many high priority, crash programs.

c. In addition to its missile programs, the Air Force is responsible for the 117L advanced reconnaisance system and has a recognized long term development responsibility for manned space flight capability with the primary objective of accomplishing satellite flight as soon as technology permits. It is important to achieve an adequate concentration of effort and energy within the Air Force on these programs with a minimum diversion of attention and of resources to lower priority projects.

3. On the basis of the foregoing general considerations as well as of more specific technical judgments, I have arrived at the following conclusions on the points raised in the two above-referenced memoranda.

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a. The Atlas 117L project should be accelerated and carried forward under the highest national priority in order to attain an initial operational capability at the earliest possible date.

b. The proposed interim reconnaissance system made up of a Thor booster combined with a second stage which carries a light-weight payload in the form of a recoverable capsule, duplicates rather than complements the Atlas 117L capability. The interim system would give only a small improvement in ttime over the Atlas 117L. Moreover, the successful and continuous operation of a recoverable reconnaissance system, with the attendant requirement for search, appears infeasible from a practical and useable military point of view. Accordingly, the development of the interim system should not be pursued.

c. In order to attain early flights of the Lockheed vehicle to be employed as the second stage in the 117L system, it may be desirable for the Air Force to plan for test firings of this vehicle utilizing a Thor booster, since an adequate number of these less expensive boosters can be made available for this purpose sooner than the Atlas booster will be available.

d. I understand that a Thor booster with a suitable second stage vehicle may be the most promptly and readily available device for experimental flights with laboratory animals. The development of such hardware is authorized, including provision for the recovery of the animals, in furtherance of the objective of manned satellite flight.

Roy W. Johnson
Director
Advanced Research Projects Agency

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ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

MAY 19 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Classification of Information on WS-117L

The Advanced Research Projects Agency has considered a request by the Department of the Air Force to provide for the declassification of certain aspects of Project WS-117L and has considered that, from a military point of view, such declassification should be authorized. However, the current international situation produced by the successful launching of Sputnik III, and certain international negotiations with the Soviet Union, have combined to make such declassification undesirable for the present. The request of the Department of the Air Force is therefore disapproved.

It is therefore requested that the Department of the Air Force take such steps as may be appropriate to insure that no further reference be made to Project 117L, reconnaissance satellites, or "the launching of very large satellites" at this time.

This Agency will keep this problem under continuous review, and, as soon as the necessary interdepartmental agreements can be obtained, will reconsider requests for declassification.

In particular, it is requested that publicity proposed by the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation respecting Project 117L be cancelled.

I am attaching herewith a copy of the views of the Department of State concerning this project for your consideration.

Roy Johnson

Roy W. Johnson
Director

GROUP - 3
Downgraded at 12 year intervals;
Not automatically declassified

Attachment
Dept of State views on above subj.

HS 58-2315 A1

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ET

The Department of State's Outer Space Committee has considered the Department of Defense's proposed press release on the U.S. reconnaissance satellite program (WS 117L). The following points emerged from this consideration:

1. It appears undesirable to have any official release at this time. A release would appear to many to be a lame effort to respond to Sputnik III and, in the context of the proposed Defense release, would give an appearance of countering with a project with heavy military overtones. (Further press questions would probably draw forth the information that the program will be conducted by SAC.)

2. A release at this time could, because of the probable violent Soviet reaction, have repercussions with respect to our efforts to initiate technical studies on the nuclear question with the Russians. It would also greatly lessen the impact of the proposed second response to the Khrushchev letter of May 9 (concerning surprise attack inspection in the Arctic).

3. Since the WS 117L program is, we understand, programmed for full initiation in 1960, there is no reason to give the Soviets a two-year lead time to build a propaganda campaign against the program in the United Nations and elsewhere.

4. The general question of the political framework in which the United States will place its reconnaissance satellite programs (e.g., making information acquired available to the UN) is now under consideration in the NSC Planning Board and in the Working Group on Disarmament Policy. The Defense Department's release prejudges the results of these considerations.

5. About six months ago there were press stories concerning projected U.S. reconnaissance satellite programs, and the Government did not respond to these stories with formal press release. There is no reason why the May 15 story in the Herald Tribune should force us to issue a release.

6. At such time as a formal press release is made, consideration should be given to releasing it through other means than the Department of Defense, since the policy implications are broad ones and a Defense Department release would highlight the military implications.

7. It would be desirable to avoid comment on the reconnaissance satellite program. However, if it is necessary to answer press inquiries, the attached response is suggested.

S/AE:LDWeiler:cr
5/16/58

US 58-2315